COVER SHEET

Title: “Lemons, Zucchinis and Broken Sticks – A Journey”

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BLANK COVER SHEET

Lemons, Zucchinis
And Broken Sticks
- A Journey

It is truly is amazing to realize how

one broken thing can

help another

One day

I awoke to a cotton blanket

That turned to stone

My ability to walk

was stolen by

a thief of the night

illness

a

robbing

of

my footing

I've never heard of

Gout

Until now…

my shadow
doesn’t know the feeling
of pain

shadows
are vacant
forms of ourselves
free of joys,
hopes and despairs

Our shadows

Merely reflect

A piece of ourselves

Belonging to soil

An immaterial piece

Less emotionally crazy

Than our material selves

Not being able to walk

Will make anyone crazy!

For the first time

in my adult life

I can’t stand

Not on my two feet

And not any of the

Pain

What war did I wage upon myself?

Too many rich foods?

Too much to drink?

Or something else?

No chance to fit

My foot in the shoe

No chance to

Screw on a black sock either

Did a stone fall

On my big right toe?

Pain strikes!

Ten times greater

than a broken tooth!

My foot swells – I see

a boulder of bone

I want to smash

with a hammer

No hope to slide

    My naked right foot

Into a shoe

My right foot

Will no longer fit inside

    anything outside

I miss my daily

Five mile walks

Up and down

Every street

I’ve got to go to the hospital

I am glad to have

Saved

A broken stick

From Big Bear

And beckon my wife

To fetch the thick stick

With two hands

I clutch

the broken tree limb

and fall!

Eventually

Live can conspire

Against each of us

With

Temptations

of

despair and suffering,

Hope and change –

Today day I'm looking

For handicapped access

-Tempted

I need help

But the hospital is too far

Away

It's too expensive

To dial any

Ambulance

So instead,

I suffer

In pain

Uneven sidewalks skirt

Sunset Boulevard

Bracing the stick

I muster up a slow limp

    Using one left foot

To do the work of two

I stumble again

Trying not to fall

You too might never fully

Notice the neglect

Of your city

Or the neglect of anything else

until neglect

Causes you to stumble

Eventually we all

stumble

The trick is to

Never fall!

After three visits

To various clinics

I find a doctor

Cheaper than the hospital

Cost of the visit

is an unlucky 13

times the going rate

Of minimum wage pay

All the time we spend working

is truly priceless

Time is never
Worth any price
high enough
to spend

Time and health
Are both priceless

No cure from the doctor
Only medicine
To ride the illness out

Suddenly a new pain is born

From yet another unexpected visit

by the thief of illness

Sores and pus invade my mouth

Unleashing a taste of death

Thanks to the prescription

I have a new illness

But my wits

finally

catch

the latest

criminal!

The doctor's medicine

has committed its robberies

Within the vaults of my cells

I suddenly realize

I've been robbed of all my

Vitamin C

What’s worse – gun rights

Or prescription pad rights?

The prescription pad too

Is a loaded gun

Every pill swallow

Is another deadly bullet

Penetrating

The flesh

Going for the soul

While sitting alone

and thumbing

Through all sorts of memories

I hitchhike

Too many regrets

Having abandoned

prior wisdoms

How did I end up in this overcrowded

Expensive city?

Why was I hoping to find something

I had already found somewhere else?

From all the questions

I find the roots to my answer

A hint finally came

I’ve got to go back to the
basics

Because from dirt

I came

And back to dirt I will go

I reach for God’s answer

To my problem -

A shrub of green zucchini

Is a big womb

Hoping

To give life to other blessed

Green zucchini’s

The zucchini has died

(and now boils in my black Wok)

To save a part of my life

From this most recent

Next bout of gout

Full of

Swelling and pain

I read

Lemons can cure gout –

I eye a bag of lemons on the table

It is worth a try!

The more

yellow lemons I devour

and green zucchini too

the less

swelling, and pain

I have

I must not give up

    on beating my affliction

I've been told that persistence

    Delivers victory

We all battle against
the conflicts of our flesh
I am still fighting

Otis, my cat

    Paws at my face

Curls in and purrs

    -Comfort is unconditional love

Middle of the night

Bathroom urge –

I hop on one foot

In the dark

Where is my walking stick?

Where is my crutch?

Being unable to see what

one is looking for

    one has no other choice

        but to blindly

    move forward

        and hope to

            find it

Being unable

to see where you are going

while needing to get somewhere

is a fact of life

My bathroom urge persists!

Far across the room

Otis,

The cat

Paws at

My cane –

How did my cane get so far away?

I set my foot down

and hold the wall -

Otis shrieks in fear!

No words can ever

Describe

A cat's worry

Or fear

I stepped on

Otis' tail

I want to pick my cat up

    And hold and kiss him

But I can’t

A thought of wisdom strikes!

Resistance

Precedes failure

Persistence

Leads to success

The next day I continue my fight

And devour more

Lemons and zucchinis

Life is persistence

Death is resistance

Against life

-I fight

For days I devour

        bag after bag of lemons

and zucchini

Until finally

I am cured of the pain

Thank you Zucchini,

Thank God you were born

To die and spare me

The death of this pain and swelling

Relieved of pain

But still unable to walk

I wake up the next morning

To my cane beside the bed

My toe is still trapped in a nightmare

My heart is still trying to flee

Back into my next freedom walk dream

Possible in the dawn

But I still can’t walk

The willingness to carry

Your own weight

Alone

Doesn't mean

You always can

The weight of the bedsheet
is once again unbearable

Has another stone fallen
upon my toe?

suffering can kill
the dreams of
all men

July 4th barbeque!

Fireworks are blasting off

Everyone is celebrating freedom

I wish I hop around

like a jumping jack

Freedom

has different meanings

for different people

I hop and limp on a broken stick -

from a perfect tree,

once perfect like my toe

It is truly is amazing to realize how

One broken thing can

Help another broken one

The broken stick

affords me enough freedom

to get outside and watch

those fireworks

breaking apart

in collective colors

Red, white and blue colors

Coat the ocean waters

Skirting both

my

wife's eyes and mine

I count my blessings

For every suffering

there is an even worse one

that can come

We have been told

that what lies between heaven and hell

is Earth…

and that anything

is possible

Broken stick,

Thank you!

From the pieces

    of your broken existence

you uncovered an almost

    perfectly wise

unexpected blessing

    for me

Again we try –

My wife fetches my cure,

Zuchinnis

from the feminine wombs

of countless zucchini

there comes another

maternal healing

-no more swelling

once again,

the pain subsides

Lemons -

My hands squeeze

    out the golden surrender -

bursts of seeds and juice pour

    through my fingers

Thank you lemon,

    for the grace of your birth and death

blesses me with pain reduction

Seven weeks later –

I’m still afraid to eat spinach

and fish again

By the eighth week,

the nightmare ended –

The bedsheet

turned from stone

to cotton

again

I can’t wait to step out

    and walk five miles again!

In no time

    I walk every street-

My freedom to roam is regained!

I walk the dead stick back out to the yard

And let it stand next to the porch,

all alone again,

and broken-

having served a purpose

into its end

my wife

hugs me!

we dance

step to step!

the trashbag full of

yellow lemon peels

and dead zucchini skins

now feeds

a family of flies

even the flies

rejoice!

life always goes on

with purpose

nothing ever goes to waste

even after every piece

inside the trash bag

is gone –

I've paid my taxes-

The trash collector

feeds

his family

and so on, and so on,

goes the cycle-

living things feed off

the dead

all flesh

returns back to soil

in order to become

fertile ground

ready to feed new seeds

*

(like those Zuchinni seeds)

seeds are existence

existence is awareness

awareness

is the root

of life

Farewell

to you, gout

and also to you lemons, zucchinis

and a broken stick

but never to any of your

your lessons

learned…

I have learned many

Lessons:

1

the curse of illness

is loss –

the blessing,

an appreciation

of what's been lost

2

struggle
is this existence

existence
bears
the seeds of
awareness

3

awareness
is the root
of life

4

awareness

is fertile ground

for growth and change

resistance

and

persistence

5

seek the reasons

behind each suffering

and each way to right

the wrong

seek the reasons

why something right

went wrong

seek the ways to right

the wrongs

in your suffering

Everything born or dead from existence

can become our healing crutch

6

resistance

precedes failure

persistence

leads to success

7

Life-

Awareness

is fertile ground

for change

8

appreciation

bears spiritual fruits

to feed the soul

with what it hungers

9

the fruits of appreciation

after they cease

recede away from awareness

casting their seeds

back to fertile ground; rebirth

awaiting change

10

in good health

be grateful

and appreciative

because

sudden illness can strike

like a bolt of lightning at

any time

11

appreciation of life

is but a harvest

of budding hopes

fighting against loss

12

I harvest appreciation

from loss

because fearing bad things will

never get better

gives birth to appreciation

of everything we have lost

and still can lose

before we lose them

I must write you

a few more things

before I leave you:

1.

be grateful for all that

you have

and be generous in mind

and heart

for those who don't have

what you do

2.

Illness, is one of many thieves in the night

which know no boundaries or strangers -

So hold on to everything you have – and be grateful.

3.

Never lose sight

of the things

you need to appreciate

It is truly is amazing to realize how

one broken thing can

help another

THE END.